

Educational Improvement Partnerships --National Programs -- Inexpensive Book Distribution

I. Legislation

Title X, Part E of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended (20 U.S.C. 8131) (expires September 30, 1999).

II. Funding History

| <u>Fiscal Year</u> | <u>Appropriation</u> | <u>Fiscal Year</u> | <u>Appropriation</u> |
|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1982 | \$5,850,000 | 1990 | \$ 8,576,000 |
| 1983 | 5,850,000 | 1991 | 9,271,000 |
| 1984 | 6,500,000 | 1992 | 10,000,000 |
| 1985 | 7,000,000 | 1993 | 10,029,000 |
| 1986 | 6,698,000 | 1994 | 10,300,000 |
| 1987 | 7,800,000 | 1995 | 10,300,000 |
| 1988 | 7,659,000 | 1996 | 10,265,000 |

III. Analysis of Program Performance

A. Goals and Objectives

The Inexpensive Book Distribution program is designed to support and promote the establishment of programs to promote reading, including the distribution of inexpensive books to students in order to encourage students to read. The program is directed at preschool, elementary, and secondary students. As a result of the National Literacy Act of 1991, the program places a selection priority for new grantees on children with special needs--such as low income children, children at risk for school failure, children with disabilities, emotionally disturbed children, foster children, homeless children, migrant children, children without access to libraries, institutionalized children, incarcerated children, and children whose parents are institutionalized or incarcerated.

B. Strategies to Achieve the Goals

Services Supported

The program, administered through a contract between the U.S. Department of Education and the nonprofit organization Reading Is Fundamental, Inc. (RIF), encourages reading by providing students with inexpensive books and motivational activities. RIF also arranges discounts for distributors to enable local organizations such as schools, PTAs, and community groups to purchase books at reduced rates.

With FY 1995 funds, approximately 4,500 local projects distributed an estimated 8 million books to 2.5 million children in 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam. Projects serve over 500,000 children at more than 2,000 sites. Since 1976, RIF has distributed over

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100 million books to local groups through its subcontractor book companies. (This figure includes books donated to the program, as well as those purchased with program funds.)

Federal funds pay for 75 percent of the book costs for all federally funded projects, except those serving children of migrant farmworkers, which receive 100 percent federal funding. With this exception, federally funded projects must raise funds to cover the remaining 25 percent of book cost and 100 percent of any other costs. Other local RIF projects are supported entirely by funds from private contributions and local fundraising efforts. Ninety-nine percent of staff operating federally funded projects are unpaid volunteers, which keeps operational costs low.

Administrative practices of local RIF projects differ. One- or two-site projects have a project coordinator who organizes project activities, enlists the support of volunteers, and selects and coordinates book selection committee members and activities. Multi-site projects include staff at a mid-management level, who oversee selected sites.

C. Program Performance—Indicators of Impact and Effectiveness

Indicators are under development.

IV. Planned Studies

None. RIF does not currently collect performance data.

V. Sources of Information

Program files for funding history.

VI. Contacts for Further Information

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